

8. Is the consumption of sleepers a growing one in this district?—We are using more than we did ten years ago, but the last five years the average has been about the same.

9. *Mr. Murdoch.*] In your opinion, would white-pine ever make a satisfactory sleeper?—Some of the creosoted ones have been very satisfactory.

10. With powellizing?—I do not know. It depends whether the process is satisfactory or not. Creosoted sleepers have proved very satisfactory, but they have been in the line only some thirteen years.

11. Have any larch sleepers been tried?—I could not say.

11A. *Mr. Adams.*] Is there any reason why maire sleepers should not be used?—I think the Department will take maire sleepers in time if they can get them. There are, however, a lot of borer-holes in maire, and that would not be satisfactory, as the holes are where the dogs go in.

12. It was represented to us that many sleepers were rejected by the Government for very small defects. Is that so?—Possibly they had worm-holes where they wanted to put the dogs in.

13. *Dr. Cockayne.*] Do the powellized sleepers decay?—Our experience with the few we had on the line was that they were decaying.

14. Did you find the creosoted ones decay?—No; they are very satisfactory. There were creosoting-works at Woodville ten years ago.

15. What does creosoting cost per sleeper?—A creosoted sleeper costs 3s. 6d., delivered, but I cannot tell you what the creosoting costs.

HENRY PAUL KAVANAGH sworn and examined. (No. 55.)

1. *The Chairman.*] I understand that you were connected for many years with the Timber Branch of the Lands Department?—Yes, for four years. I am now a retired Civil servant.

2. Do you wish to make any statement?—In all cases I think it is a shame to fell really valuable milling-timber to provide land for settlement purposes. In the Wairarapa district, which was the finest milling-area I have ever seen, mills were erected, after the country was in grass, to cut up a few odd logs here and there, so scarce was timber. I am strongly of opinion that any milling-country that contains 7,000 ft. to the acre, if it is easy of access, should be reserved for timber purposes, and not burnt to provide land for settlement. In all cases where the land contains 10,000 ft. to the acre, no matter how remote it may be, the surveyors should be instructed to report on the quantity and quality of the timber with a view to reserving the bush. The land is of more value to the settler—by £2 an acre—if the heavy trees are reserved. He has not to fell them.

3. In that case would the land be thrown open for settlement immediately the bush is cut?—Yes, if the adjoining bushes are not interfered with, otherwise a fire would be fatal when standing bush in the neighbourhood is being cleared. In the case of fire the Government should provide grass-seed, and see that it is sown as soon as the country is burnt. My plan would mean that good milling-timber would be taken out before the land was opened for settlement, and consequently the value of that timber would be saved to the State.

4. Do you think the time has arrived when the Government, in disposing of timber, should have the trees measured and the contents computed before disposing of milling-areas?—If the timber is worth 1s. a hundred feet, or more, the trees are worth measuring. Then the sawmiller can have no complaint, because if he says he has not got his quantity the number of each tree can be ascertained from the schedule. I was Crown Lands Ranger in the Wairarapa, and was sent to Auckland to take charge of the kauri forests, and I initiated the system of measuring I now advocate should be enforced in all districts. The practice then was not to take any notice of undersized trees, but that was altered, and now such trees have to be paid for. Prior to that time the timber was sold mostly on an estimate, and the kahikatea and other good milling-timbers were not calculated in the schedule—only kauri—so they got those for nothing. At one time the Crown would sell a clump of bush, but there were no boundaries; as soon as I came here the areas were laid out according to the creeks, a line being cut round each boundary. All sections and boundaries were distinctly shown, and it was not possible for the miller to go over his boundary. If he did the other man would soon stop him.

5. In measuring trees here do they use the Hopper's measurement?—They use a "ready reckoner," possibly a Hopper's. It is quite different to the railway measurement, which generally indicates a great deal less timber than is sold to a company by the Government. Of course, the millers say it does not pay to put second-class timber on the railway-truck, and so we are losing a lot of valuable timber which would be suitable for many purposes. I would not use sap of rimu for any durable work; it is fit only for packing-cases. When the Government set aside milling-areas they should make provision for a road reserve between those areas and the railway, otherwise the millers are blocked in getting the timber. So with creeks; 1 chain wide on each side of a river should be reserved to give access for the purpose of floating timber down the creeks. I know of cases where settlers have planted orchards to obstruct the access to the creeks and rivers, and then have claimed heavy damages in case of a fresh, when the timber has done no harm to their holdings at all in floating down the creek. In one case a man claimed £968 from a timber company for damages done by their logs to his fences, and finally he took £19.

6. Have you any suggestion as to how to obviate these matters in the case of private lands?—I am now only referring to reservations of standing timber before the land is thrown open for selection. I want to give the miller a clear run for his money. All reserves should be fenced to keep cattle out, otherwise the bush is spoilt and destroyed. Many of the reserves here are not fenced. As soon as settlement gets up to a reserve the farmers want it. There was a fine bit